

THREAT HIGHLIGHT

ITAC

Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre

CIET

Centre intégré d'évaluation du terrorisme

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SECRET//CANADIAN EYES ONLY

Threats to Canadian political figures and government locations in the context of protests and emergency response measures s.38

TERRORISM THREAT LEVELS



CANADA ↔ MEDIUM

↔ MEDIUM

Uniformed Personnel

LEGEND: Established ↔ Raised ↑ Lowered ↓ Remains ↔

On 14 February 2022, the Government of Canada (GC) invoked the Emergencies Act. While downtown Ottawa has been secured by police, the protesters have set up staging areas in rural locations near the city. Meanwhile, protests continue to occur at border crossings and provincial capitals across Canada. This report assesses the near-term potential of a terrorist attack targeting political figures and symbols of government in Canada in light of ongoing volatility s.38

KEY JUDGMENTS

- ITAC has no s.38 information indicating a specific threat to political figures or government locations in Canada. However, the leveraging of the protests by adherents of ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE), as well as continued violent rhetoric directed at politicians, is cause for concern. While online threats may not be indicative of actual intent to engage in violence, individuals vulnerable to disinformation and incitements could be inspired by anti-government and anti-authority IMVE narratives and conduct an attack against a public figure or symbol of government. s.3
- An attack against a legislative building, including Parliament Hill, is unlikely given security measures in place s.38
- IMVE influencers will use the outcome of the protests for continued recruitment and propaganda, regardless of whether pandemic restrictions are relaxed. In the near term, IMVE adherents will likely use police enforcement to encourage violent revenge or as further evidence of government "tyranny." Likewise, while some IMVE supporters will call for more popular uprisings and a global anti-authority

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DEFINITIONS and HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS are located at the last page.

Canada

movement, the most extreme IMVE adherents will likely highlight the ineffectiveness of non-violent protest against perceived government "tyranny" or overreach. s.38

INCREASED THREATS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS DURING PROTESTS

Federal parliamentarians were advised to stay clear of the protests for their own safety amid a flurry of online threats and incitements to violence directed towards elected officials in Canada. Violent rhetoric has predominantly targeted Prime Minister (PM) Trudeau, who is often portrayed by IMVE adherents as a criminal, traitor and a key figure in a global liberal conspiracy. s.38

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there has been a noticeable increase in threatening behaviour towards Members of Parliament (MPs) and incidents at constituency offices since the beginning of the protests, including a recent fire believed to be an arson and a few minor physical altercations with staff. This threatening behaviour has been primarily focused on vaccine mandates and the Government's enacting of the Emergencies Act, and has been directed at members of all political parties.

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REACTIONS TO ARRESTS AND CRACKDOWN

As of 22 February 2022, police had laid nearly 400 charges, some of which included assaulting police officers and weapons possession, arrested nearly 200 individuals and froze several financial accounts and payments. According to media reporting, there were limited incidents which involved police use of force to clear the streets and maintain order. IMVE ideologues have portrayed the police response as "brutality" and the invocation of the Emergencies Act as further proof of GC "tyranny," comparing GC tactics to those of foreign dictatorships. Several online incitements to violence have surfaced in the aftermath of the crackdown, with several users implying that violence against politicians, police and even their families was the only option left. s.38

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IDENTIFYING AND REVEALING PERSONAL LOCATIONS (DOXXING)

Parliamentarians were made aware about the potential for doxxing (ITAC comment: identifying and revealing personal information with malicious intent) during the lead-up to the Ottawa protest. In late January 2022, PM Trudeau and his family were relocated due to security concerns. s.38

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THREATS TO GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND CONSTITUENCY OFFICES

According to media reporting, police were continuing investigated after several federal MPs received suspicious packages at their Nova Scotia constituency offices. s.38

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ASSESSMENTS

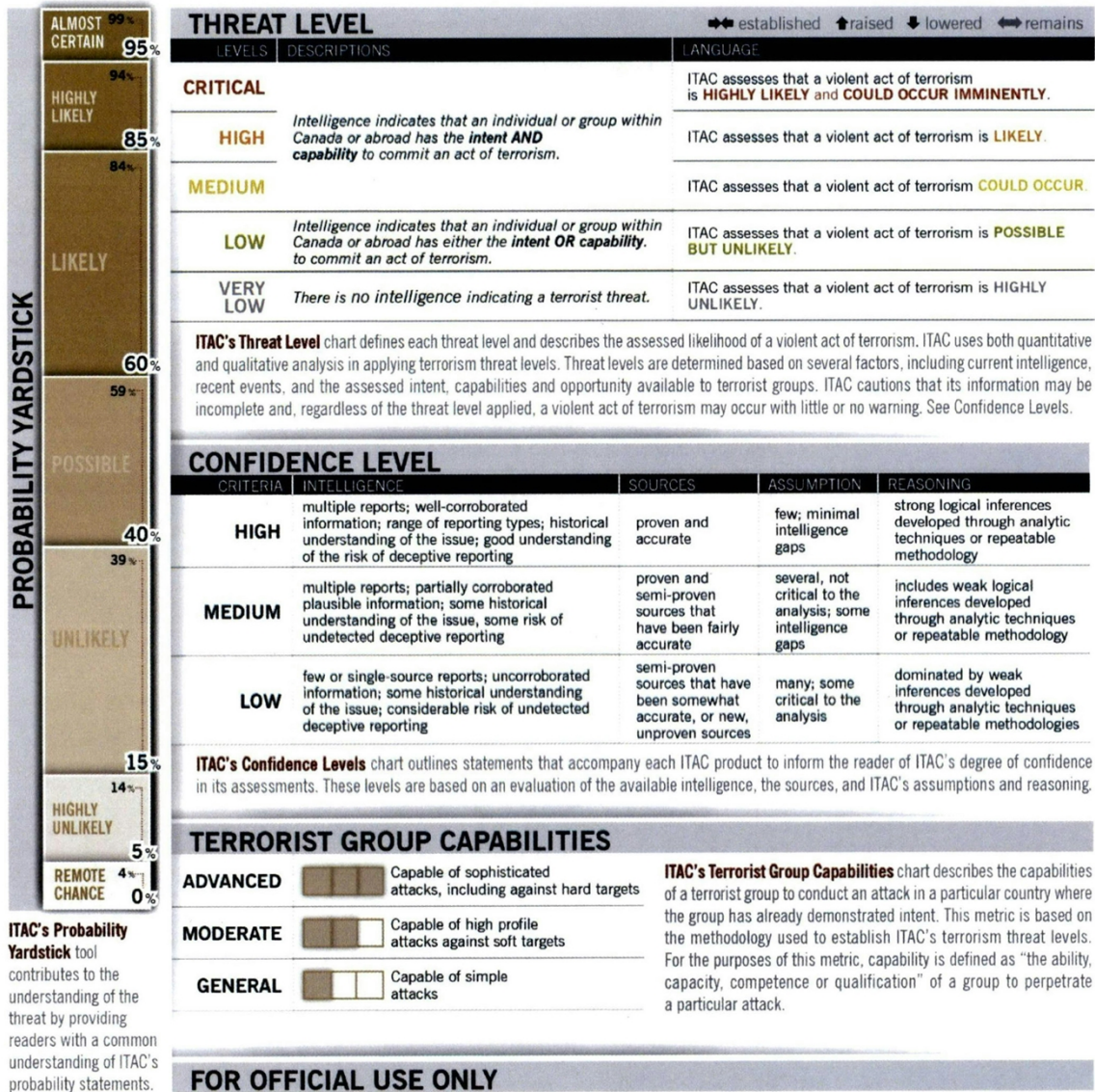
- The Freedom Convoy and related protests at government buildings and border crossings have fuelled anti-government and anti-authority sentiments among IMVE adherents. The perceived notion that societal resilience is fragile, or that the government/police response justifies violent resistance, could inspire a lone actor or small group inspired by IMVE to conduct an opportunistic attack against a political figure or symbol of government. s.38
- Supporters of IMVE will continue to encourage, and capitalize on, anti-government sentiments and protest movements, whether related to the pandemic or other issues, in an attempt to degrade public confidence and social cohesion, and to attract vulnerable individuals to their ideological cause. s.38
- A lone attacker would likely employ low-sophistication methods against an accessible target or official, s.38
- The future loosening of public health restrictions may calm the protest movement, however, IMVE adherents, particularly those wanting to accelerate the demise of current social and political orders, are unlikely to be placated. IMVE threats to political figures and government symbols will persist into the foreseeable future. s.38

Terrorism Threat Levels

Canada ↔ MEDIUM ↔ MEDIUM Threat levels as of 1 December 2021 s.38

-  An act of terrorism **COULD OCCUR**. s.38
-  There is intent *and* capability from both domestic and international extremist actors to commit an act of terrorism in Canada. s.38
-  An act of terrorism directly affecting **uniformed personnel** in Canada **COULD OCCUR**. s.38
- Intelligence indicates that an individual or group **within Canada** or abroad has the intent *and* capability to commit an act of terrorism in Canada. There remain individuals both in Canada and abroad who advocate violence and aspire to carry out terrorist attacks domestically. ITAC notes that inspired individuals typically act alone or in relatively small groups, and that attack planning can progress quickly, and may go undetected. **ITAC assesses that an act of terrorism could occur in Canada.** s.38
- Propaganda identifying **uniformed personnel** as potential targets continues to be published online. ITAC notes there are indications of intent to target uniformed personnel in Canada. Notwithstanding, ITAC assesses that, at present, uniformed personnel are more likely to be targeted incidentally while performing their duties. **ITAC assesses that a violent act of terrorism affecting uniformed personnel in Canada could occur.** s.38





ITAC's Probability Yardstick tool contributes to the understanding of the threat by providing readers with a common understanding of ITAC's probability statements.

HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

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Any feedback should be directed via CTSN email to: **S.38**

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